

ARE YOU THIRSTY?  
EXODUS 17:1-7

In Exodus chapter 17, God had recently delivered the children of Israel from the oppression of the Egyptians.

- They had seen the power of God at the Red Sea.
- They had tasted the bitter waters of Marah made sweet.
- They had been filled with manna and quail from heaven.

They had only been on their journey for a month; yet with all of these examples of God's power to supply every need, they still lacked faith in Him.

Here at Rephidim there was no water and the people were thirsty.

They began to question, "Where is God? Is God here?"

Certainly God was there, but the people couldn't get their eyes off of their problem long enough to see Him.

You see, this is more than a question of geography; it is a question of spiritual growth.

Do you ever feel like you're still at Rephidim?

-- You're still very thirsty.

-- You still doubt the presence of God,  
which we all have the tendency to do,  
when things get tough.

Rephidim is that place. You know that place.

That place you're at  
when you're destitute  
and need a spiritual drink from the river of God.

That's the place we're at today.  
You're either there now,  
have been there,  
or will be there soon.

So please take to heart these four spiritual lessons that we can learn at Rephidim.

I. **GOD ALLOWS US TO THIRST (17:1)**

*<sup>1</sup> The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. (Exod 17:1)*

God led them to a place where there was no water.

Are we to expect that God will allow us to be thirsty?

I am talking about physical need, dire need.

Such need that if we don't get it we'll die.

The Hebrews in the desert needed water; without it they'd die.

How many days can you go without water in a desert environment?

They were in a state of panic because they were helpless.

We can take a lot but helplessness isn't one of them.

We take our kids on a trip in the car and they argue and fight over the last sip of water or the last cracker.

They say, "I've never been so thirsty in my life. I'm dying of thirst."

Just imagine what it was like for these people in the desert.

Perhaps the moms went to their husbands and said,  
 “You’ve got to do something...Are you going to let us die of thirst?”

So the men banded together and complained to Moses about being thirsty.

This is why the Psalmist wrote in chapter 78,

- <sup>19</sup> *They spoke against God, saying,  
 “Can God spread a table in the desert?  
<sup>20</sup> When he struck the rock, water gushed out,  
 and streams flowed abundantly.  
 But can he also give us food?  
 Can he supply meat for his people?”*
- <sup>21</sup> *When the LORD heard them, he was very angry;  
 his fire broke out against Jacob,  
 and his wrath rose against Israel,  
<sup>22</sup> for they did not believe in God  
 or trust in his deliverance. (Psa 78:19-22)*

The children of Israel were blinded to a greater truth and reality.

God led them to a waterless place on purpose  
 to see what was in their hearts.

They didn’t believe in God  
 or trust in his deliverance  
 because they couldn’t get their eyes off  
 of the problem long enough to see God.

Even though God had brought them through the Red Sea as on dry  
 ground, they still didn’t “see” God.

Why don’t we “see God”?

Why do we focus on the stuff?

We're here purely by the grace of God.

You see, God was teaching them then just as he is teaching us today that our survival isn't determined by what we can see.

We are bombarded from every direction  
with a philosophy of life  
that teaches us  
that we are to trust in a physical and natural system of cause and effect.

We are taught not to look to God but to ourselves.

And that's the source of their fear and anxiety as well ours.

God wants them to look to Him.

1. Their hunger was met by the manna.
2. Their thirst was met by the streams of Horeb.
3. The hour of man's need  
is often the hour of God's richest gift and blessing.

**God will lead us to the water if we will follow Him.**

## II. **GOD ALONE CAN QUENCH OUR THIRST (17:2-4)**

<sup>2</sup> *So they quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink."  
Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the  
LORD to the test?"*

<sup>3</sup> *But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against  
Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and  
our children and livestock die of thirst?"*

<sup>4</sup> *Then Moses cried out to the LORD, "What am I to do with these people?  
They are almost ready to stone me." (Exod 17:2-4)*

A. The Israelites blamed Moses for not having water.

1. Do you ever blame others for what God doesn't give you?
2. All my life until my dad died, I blamed him for not loving me the way I wanted and expected. It wasn't until after the funeral (I guess my mom sensed my need) that my mom told me, "Dane, your dad loved you as much as he could."
  - a. Have you ever blamed your parents?
  - b. Have you ever blamed your spouse?
  - c. Do you ever blame others for what God doesn't give you?
3. This is the wrong thing to do because only God can quench our thirst.
4. It was not in Moses' power to create fountains!

B. Have you noticed that we get into trouble when we look to man, when we ought to look to God?

1. It's the way of the world.
2. But it's not the way of the Christian.

C. The application:

1. If you are seeking spiritual water to quench the thirst of your soul, don't go to the creature, but to the Creator.

2. The Israelites went to Moses and asked him to satisfy their thirst, but in vain.
3. The good things of this life can't satisfy this deep longing of the soul.
  - a. Science can't.
  - b. A good name can't.
  - c. Entertainment can't.
  - d. God alone can quench its thirst.
4. If you drink of the wells of earth you will thirst again; but if you drink of the water of the Spirit you will thirst no more.
5. Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well,
 

<sup>13</sup> ... *“Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”* (John 4:13-14)

**God will lead us to the water if we will follow Him.**

### III. **GOD QUENCHES OUR THIRST IN HIS WAY (17:5-6)**

<sup>5</sup> *The LORD answered Moses, “Walk on ahead of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. <sup>6</sup> I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.” So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel.* (Exod 17:5-6)

A. Where was God going to get the water?

1. Just imagine what those people that day were thinking.
2. How would God resolve this great contradiction?
3. God promised them a land flowing with milk and honey and they have is sand, heat and misery.

B. Can you believe it?

The thirst of Israel was quenched by water from a flat rock.

1. Who would expect clear, bright, running water from a flinty rock?
2. The providence of God can make rocks into rivers.
3. We have to remember this lesson taught to us at Rephidim.
4. We don't know the possibilities of the things around us,

but if we look to God  
we'll get our blessings  
from where we least expect them.

- a. We can get pity from:  
the hardhearted,  
money from the miserly,  
and harvests from barren places.
- b. Nature yields her secret treasures at the voice of God.

- c. Every rock in the desert of your life is embraced by the hand of God.
- c. From what source will come the water to satisfy the thirst of your soul?
1. Certainly not from the rivers of worldly pleasures.
  2. Not from the streams of human philosophy.
  3. But from the One who was despised and rejected of men.
    - a. A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
    - b. From Jesus Christ, the Rock, comes the spiritual water which alone can quench the thirst of the soul.

**God will lead us to the water if we will follow Him.**

**IV. GOD WILL NOT FORCE US TO DRINK (17:7)**

*<sup>7</sup> And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the LORD saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?” (Exodus 17:7)*

- A. Their question, “*Is the LORD among us or not,*” revealed their ingratitude and unbelief.
  1. They’d argued with Moses, the prophet of God.
  2. They’d forgotten the sweetened waters of Marah.
  3. They’d forgotten the pillar of cloud through which God had led them.

4. In the presence of these things, they asked,

*“Is the Lord among us or not?”*

B. Some people just refuse to see the clearest signs of God’s Divine Presence in the experiences of life.

1. They are slow to recognize God in their midst.
2. We have to learn to see the world differently.
3. We have to learn to see the invisible world.
4. It has to become “real” to us so that we can see God.
  - a. The greatest thing in life is to see and experience God.

## Conclusion

Have you ever felt the need of spiritual water?

There is a thirst of soul  
which needs immediate attention.

Earthly things cannot appease this thirst.

Jesus said,

*<sup>13</sup> ... “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” (John 4:13-14)*

If you have never obeyed the gospel,  
I invite you to come this morning and receive the water of life.

Revelation 7:17 says,

*<sup>17</sup> The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life. (Rev 7:17)*

Saul of Tarsus was told,

*<sup>16</sup> And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.' (Acts 22:16)*

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To those who are saved,  
realize that the life of the soul cannot be sustained  
without the water of the Holy Spirit.

He is absolutely essential.

We are dependent upon heaven for it.

No human creature can supply it.

It flows clear as crystal  
from the throne of God and the Lamb.

It is beyond price, and yet is free.

It is refreshing to the weary soul.

Do you need to come and ask God  
to fill you with the precious Holy Spirit?

**God will lead us to water if we will follow him.**

Come today!